

ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNAL USE ONLY DD/S REGISTRY

FILE *Medical*

DD/S 72-2789

14 JUL 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Medical Services

SUBJECT : Overweight Employees

REFERENCE : Memo dtd 10 July 72 for Acting DD/S fr DMS, same subj

John:

You will probably think we're hard to please or that we don't understand your professional problem in taking aggressive action on this subject. Both may be true but, nevertheless, I know that the proposal in Ref is not responsive (at least in form) to what the Director wants, and I also know that we cannot tell him that a more specific and direct program is not going to be proposed. Part of the problem is your oblique and modest style of writing. Recommend, don't suggest. Use the active voice and the indicative mode, be specific rather than general. What you have put in subparagraphs 1.a., b., and c. is fine but let's outline it as positive direct steps. For instance:

1. The Director should say to his senior staff: "A few days ago I asked Jack Coffey whether there were anything we could do about human fat and about heart problems. John Tietjen has made the point that cardiovascular disease is not a simple thing and that overweight is not clearly the culprit. No argument though that excess poundage is not good. He has worked up a program to try to do something about getting people to trim some of the lard off. We're going to be getting out an Employee Bulletin in a few days, but I want to underscore my personal interest in the program and ask you to take an interest also. Now I don't want to be unreasonable and I know that not everybody was born to be lean and mean, and I also know that whether a man or a woman does anything about his weight is his personal business. But some prodding here and there might do some good. I want all of you to do some of that prodding."

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2. We are preparing a series of posters for Agency bulletin boards about the individual's responsibility to himself and the organization to take care of his health and focusing on weight problems.

3. Attached is a proposed Employee Bulletin which we will issue after your (DCI) statement.

etc., etc. ----

12/8/72
Robert S. Wattles
Acting Deputy Director
for Support

Acting DD/S:RSW/ms (14 July 72)

Distribution:

Orig & 1 - Adse

1 - DD/S Chrono (*do not circulate*)

1 - DD/S Subject, w/Ref (DD/S 72-2738) and Background (DD/S 72-2570, etc.)

1 - RSW Chrono

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RSW

OMS is really struggling with this one! I still don't believe the plan is sufficiently specific to satisfy the Director. All the ingredients are here but they are mixed or stated in a manner that leaves the impression of ambivalence - Perhaps you will want to discuss with Mr. J. - or maybe I expect more than OMS can handle. — P

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DD/S 12.2738

10 JUL 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Overweight Employees

1. There are several ways of promoting a weight reduction program in the Agency. The most effective way it seems to us is to follow an earlier formula laid down by the Civil Service Commission to curb problem drinking. This approach combines management responsibility with technical and professional resources and would be essentially as follows:

a. It is our suggestion that the Director state his concerns about overweight personnel to his senior staff. We think this should be done verbally. In stating his views the Director may care to indicate that personnel with obvious excess weight can be identified by supervisors.

b. The supervisor should make known to the individual that he shares the Director's interest and concern for the employee's well-being and his ability to work at his best in his job. Individuals, so identified, might work in concert with their own private physicians or obtain advice and assistance through the consultative services of the Office of Medical Services.

c. Our office will continue to wrestle on a daily basis with problems of obesity as they come to our attention through our examination programs. Our guidance and advice in each instance would be strengthened by an established management attitude as suggested. Those cases coming to us through consultative services would continue to receive individually tailored attention according to specific needs, including examination and referral as required.

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SUBJECT: Overweight Employees

2. An alternative to the foregoing is for the OMS to broaden its examination program. This is in our plans for the future. To do so immediately would involve increased costs and additional personnel. While early achievement of goals is desirable, acceleration of programming to achieve weight reduction primarily is difficult to justify.

3. As an adjunct to any weight reduction effort, education is helpful. Our office plans to complement ongoing efforts with a broader education program. We can do this through the printed word in various Agency media and through our lectures and appearances. We do much in this regard now. Although education benefits the cause, it is not an alternative that stands on its own legs. The control of obesity requires some added push.

4. If the suggestion that the Director comment to his senior staff is acceptable, some consideration to periodic reinforcement along similar lines would also be in order. Weight reduction programs are notoriously not successful. Such efforts may be more lasting when linked to an established Agency attitude and sense of discipline.



JOHN R. TIETJEN, M. D.
Director of Medical Services

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